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Polci language

Polci (Pəlci, Posə) is an Afro-Asiatic language of Bauchi State, Nigeria. It is part of the Barawa cluster, which is in turn part of the West Chadic language family.

Polci	
Barawa[1]	
Region	Bauchi State
Native speakers	(22,000 cited 1995)[2]
Language family	Afro-Asiatic ▪ Chadic ▪ West ▪ Barawa (B.3) ▪ Zaar ▪ Polci Cluster ▪ **Polci**
Dialects	Zul (Mbarmi, Barma) Baram (Mbaram, Barang) Dir (Diir, Dra, Baram Dutse) Buli Langas (Nyamzak, Lundur) Polci (Posa, Polshi, Palci) Luri
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	Either: `plj` – Polci `ldd` – Luri
Glottolog	`nyam1284 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/nyam1284)`[3]

Zule[4]	
Person	Nya Zule
People	Man Zule

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Dialects

The Polci language is one of six dialect clusters of the Zaar subgroup of the Barawa branch of the Chadic languages. The Polci dialects are Zul, Baram (Mbaram), Dir, Buli, Nyamzak/Langas, and Polci proper.[5][4]

An extinct dialect called Luri was possibly dialect of Polci as well, but it is not well attested.[2]

History of scholarship

There have been several attempts to clarify the linguistic situation in the southern and southwestern part of Bauchi State, Nigeria, of which the Polci cluster and Polci language are a part.

Language	Bi Zule

In 1971, John Ballard, working with the Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages, University of Ibadan, did an extensive linguistic survey of the Nigerian Middle Belt published *Historical inferences from the linguistic geography of the Nigerian Middle Belt*. As a result, it came to light that there was a narrow corridor occupied by the speakers of Chadic languages in the southwest of Bauchi.[1]

In the same year, Neil Campbell and James Hoskison from the Summer Institute of Linguistics carried out a linguistic survey of the Bauchi area. The survey, *Bauchi Area Survey Report* and published in 1972, listed the names, location and population of twenty four Chadic languages, which are very closely related to each other and are spoken to the south and west of Bauchi. They also collected word lists. However, no detailed analysis of linguistic data or language classification was included in either of these surveys.[1]

Also in 1971, C. Hoffman published *Provisional Check List of Chadic Languages*, which contained 17 languages divided into two sub-groups. This list was revised and amplified by Kay Williamson in a document handed out to students at the University of Ibadan, titled *Chadic languages of Nigeria* in 1972, to include 21 languages classified into three subgroups.[1]

With this information, K. Shimizu set out in 1974 to list the languages belonging to the Southern Bauchi Group, to examine their geographical distribution, and to use valid linguistic data to come up with sub-classifications. The survey, published in 1978 and titled *A survey report of The South Bauchi Group of Chadic Languages* came to the conclusion that not all languages listed under the dialect continuum of the South Bauchi Group belonged there and came up with a much more extensive, new classification. This is also the work from which the Barawa subgroup name came from, which was found to be the term used locally in this area to denote the speakers of this dialect continuum.[1] Much of the research done on Barawa languages, the Polci cluster, and Polci itself use this survey as an important reference.

In 1999, Ronald Cosper published *Barawa lexicon: A wordlist of eight South Bauchi (West Chadic) languages: Boghom, Buli, Dott, Geji, Jimi, Polci, Sayanci and Zul*. It considered most of the languages to be endangered and found that most individuals who spoke any of these languages were also bilingual in Hausa, which may have had influence on their lexicons and grammars. The book contains a lexicon of 852 words from the different Barawa languages. The words are organized based on semantic and syntactic categories. Semantic noun categories are followed by adjectives, numerals, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions and a number of categories of verbs.[6] However, Cosper's work was seriously defective.[7]

Since then, the majority of the research on South Bauchi West (B.3) languages has been conducted by Bernard Caron, a faculty member at the French National Centre for Scientific Research, LLACAN. Caron's research has focused on South Bauchi West and Polci cluster languages in particular. Many of his papers are available online and include topics such as linguistic classification, syntactic structures such as conditionals, and noun classes such as pronominal and number systems.

Phonology

Consonants

Polci contains 35 consonant phonemes.[6]

/ɓ/ and /ɗ/ are implosive consonants, which are common in the languages of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Table 1: Polci Consonants

		Labial		Alveolar		Palatal		Velar	
Nasal			m		n				ŋ
Plosive	**prenasal**		ᵐb		ⁿd				ᵑg
	plain	p	b	t	d			k	g
	implosive		ɓ		ɗ				
Affricate				t͡s	d͡z	t͡ʃ	d͡ʒ		
Fricative	**prenasal**		(ᵐv)		ⁿz		ⁿʒ		
	plain	f	v	s	z	ʃ	ʒ	(x)	ɣ
	lateral			ɬ	ɮ				
Approximant			w		l		j		
Rhotic					r				

Vowels

Polci contains six vowels qualities,[6] which can be pronounced as short or long.

Short vowels: /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, /ə/, and /u/

Long vowels: /aː/, /eː/, /iː/, /oː/, /əː/, and /uː/

Table 2: Polci Vowels

i		u
e	ə	o
		a
iː		uː
eː	əː	oː
	aː	

Tones

Polci is a three-tone language: Lo = à; Mid = a; Hi = á.[8]

Nouns

Plurality

Polci, being a South Bauchi West language, does not possess grammatical gender or nominal classes and as a rule, few nouns form a plural (morpho-lexical plural). The plural inside the NP (noun phrase) is expressed through the noun modifiers. There is no agreement between the verb and its arguments. However, plurality appears in the verb phrase in two places: (i) the formation of the imperatives (ii) a verbal derivation forming what has come to be called pluractionals.[9]

Pronouns

Table 3: Polci Independent Pronouns[9]

1st Person Singular	ám
2nd Person Singular	kí
3rd Person Singular	tí
1st Person Plural	mì
2nd Person Plural	kì
3rd Person Plural	wún

Numbers

Polci has a decimal numeral system.[10]

Table 4: Polci Number System[10]

1. nɨm	21. zì rop ɨiyè ni nɨm
2. rŏp	22.
3. miyèn	23.
4. wupsɨ	24. zì rop ɨiyè ni wupsɨ
5. nəmtəm	25. zì rop ɨiyè ni nəmtəm
6. maɣà	26.
7. wusɨrmìyen	27.
8. wɨsɨpsɨ	28.
9. nàtoropsɨ	29.
10. zup	30. zì miyèn
11. zup ɨiyè nɨm	40. zì wupsɨ
12. zup ɨiyè ròp	50. zì nəmtəm
13. zup ɨiyè miyèn	60. zì maɣà
14. zup ɨiyè wupsɨ	70. zì wusɨrmìyen
15. zup ɨiyè nəmtəm	80. zì wɨsɨpsɨ
16. zup ɨiyè maɣà	90. zì nàtoropsɨ
17. zup ɨiyè wusɨrmìyen	100. zì zup
18. zup ɨiyè wɨsɨpsɨ	200.
19. zup ɨiyè nətopsi	1000.
20. zì rop	2000.

Syntax

Conditionals

Conditionals generally are assumed to share their structure with topics. However, in Chadic South Bauchi West languages, such as Polci, conditionals share their structure with focus, not topic. In Polci specifically, focused constituents and conditional clauses appear on the left periphery marked by the identifying copula /kœn/ 'it is'.].[11]

References

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Further reading

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- Cosper, R. & Gital, G. 2004: Genitive Constructions in South Bauchi (West Chadic) Languages, Zul and Polchi, with Comparisons to Ancient Egyptian. *Egyptian and Semito-Hamitic (Afro-Asiatic) studies: In memoriam W. Vycichl.* Leiden: Brill.

External links

- Bernard Caron (https://cnrs.academia.edu/BernardCARON/Papers) at Academia.edu
- Polci (http://www.endangeredlanguages.com/lang/4975) at the Endangered Languages Project
- Words of Life – Bible Stories in Polci (http://globalrecordings.net/en/program/c14561) at the Global Recordings Network
- Polci dictionary (https://ids.clld.org/contributions/221)

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